

ABERCARN
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
AND
CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR
FOR THE YEAR 1971

ABERCARN URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCILLORS :

Chairman	...	...	...	Councillor R. J. Robson
Vice-Chairman	...	...	...	Councillor A. P. Griffiths
Councillor F. Edwards, B.E.M.			„	W. J. Cross, J.P.
„ D. H. Padfield			„	J. Edwards, B.A.
„ J. C. Pearce			„	E. H. Williams, J.P.
„ W. H. Davies			„	W. C. H. Ford
„ B. Evans			„	L. S. Gulliford
„ E. N. Fletcher			„	F. Knight
„ P. J. James			„	F. G. Perkins
„ O. J. Thorne				
„ H. B. Connolly				

OFFICERS :

Clerk & Solicitor	...	...	...	F. Mervyn Davies
Treasurer & Chief Financial Officer	...	...	...	T. H. Dixon
Engineer & Surveyor	...	...	...	C. C. Hardwick
Housing Engineer	...	...	...	T. J. Laramy
Medical Officer of Health	...	...	...	Dr. K. E. Howells
Chief Public Health Officer	...	...	...	Lloyd G. Hale

LOCAL GOVERNMENT JOCKIES

" We cannot all be masters "

*Othello
Shakespeare.*

To the Chairman and Members of the Council,

It gives me great pleasure to present the Annual Report for 1971 for your consideration.

During the year there were 308 live births and 192 deaths within the area, a natural increase of 116, although the estimated mid year population of 18,460 shows a fall of 200 compared with last year.

The crude birth rate for the area was 16.7 per 1,000 population, with an adjusted rate of 16.4 per 1,000 population. This is 0.4 above the national average. There were 18 illegitimate births in the area, 6% of the total births, which is the average for the County of Monmouthshire, the national average being 8%. There were 5 still births giving a rate of 16 per 1,000 total live and still births, this shows a rise compared to the previous two years. The perinatal mortality rate is 26 per 1,000 total live and still births. The Infant mortality rate of 16 per 1,000 live births shows a marked fall compared with last year and is below the national average, though slightly higher than that for the County of Monmouthshire as a whole.

The crude death rate for the district was 10.4 per 1,000 population, with an adjusted rate of 12.4 per 1,000, compared with the national average of 11.6 per 1,000, and the average for Monmouthshire of 13.4 per 1,000 population. Diseases of the heart and circulation again give rise to the largest number of deaths, 78 in all, 58 of which were due to coronary heart disease. There were 44 deaths from cancer, 23 males and 21 females.

The chief causes of death are summarised as follows:

	Total deaths	Percentage of total deaths
Heart and circulatory diseases	78	40.63
Cerebra vascular disease	24	12.50
Cancer	44	22.92
Respiratory diseases	23	11.98
Motor vehicle and other accidents	11	5.73
Other causes	12	6.25

*“ There is some ill abrewing towards my rest
For I did dream of money-bags tonight Shylock.”*

Area of Abercarn Urban District Council	9,543
Population	18,460
Inhabited houses	6.408
Number of houses owned by Council ...	1,931
Rateable Value 1st April, 1970	£375,822
1st April, 1971	£391,841
1st April, 1972	£391,531
Product of Penny Rate 1969/70	£1,475.0.0.
1970/71	£1,500.0.0.
1971/72	£3,600.0.0.

VITAL STATISTICS

BIRTHS

	1969	1970	1971
Males	146	149	165
Females	144	145	143
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	290	294	308
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

Birth rate of 1,000 of the Population ... 16.4

STILLBIRTHS

	1969	1970	1971
Stillbirth rate of 1,000 of live and still births	10	7	16

DEATHS

	1969	1970	1971
Males	124	139	101
Females	110	75	91
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	234	214	192
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

VITAL STATISTICS—1971

	Abercarn	Mon. County Council	England and Wales
Live Births	308	5,619	783,165
Live birth rate per 1,000 of population	16.4	16.4	16.0
Stillbirths	5	90	9,898
Stillbirth rate per 1,000 live and still births	16.0	16.0	12.0
Infant deaths	5	85	13,726
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births—total ...	16.0	15.0	18.0
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births— legitimate	17.0	15.0	17.0
Neo Natal (first four weeks)	10.0	10.0	12.0
Death rate per 1,000 of population	12.8	13.4	11.6
Number of deaths	192	4,195	567,345
Mid year population (estimated)	18,460	349,860	48,815,000

INFANTILE MORTALITY

NUMBER OF DEATHS UNDER ONE YEAR

				1969	1970	1971
Boys	...	...	...	5	3	4
Girls	...	...	...	2	5	1
				—	—	—
				7	8	5
				—	—	—

Infantile Mortality Rate: 16.0

CAUSES OF INFANT DEATHS AT VARIOUS AGES

					0 to 4 weeks	4 weeks to one year
ALL CAUSES	...	...	...	...	3	2
Measles	...	...	...	...	—	—
Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	—	—
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	...	—	—
Influenza	...	...	...	...	—	—
Cerebral Spinal Fever		...	...	...	—	—
Cancer (Malignant Disease)	...	...	...	...	—	—
Syphilis	...	...	...	...	—	—
Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	—	—
Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	—	—
Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	—	1
Other Respiratory Diseases	...	...	...	...	—	—
Diarrhoea	...	...	...	...	—	—
Congenital Anomalies		...	...	...	—	1
Premature Births	...	...	...	...	—	—
Birth Injury, Difficult Labour, etc.	...	...	...	...	1	—
Digestive Diseases	...	...	...	...	—	—
Other Endocrine, etc., Diseases		...	...	...	—	—
Other Diseases of Nervous System, etc.		...	...	...	—	—
Violence	...	...	...	...	—	—
Benign and Unspecified Neoplasms	...	...	...	...	—	—
Meningococcal Infection	...	...	...	...	1	—
Other Causes of Perinatal Mortality		...	...	...	1	—
					—	—
					3	2
					—	—

IRONY

*" War is no strife
To a dark house and the detested wife."*

All's Well That Ends Well.

ACUTE RESPIRATORY DISEASES—DEATHS

			1969	1970	1971
Bronchitis	...	...	20	18	9
Pneumonia	...	...	9	6	11
Other Forms	...	...	2	3	3
			<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
			31	27	23
			<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

CANCER DEATHS

			1969	1970	1971
Males	...	...	20	21	23
Females	...	...	30	12	21
			<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
			50	33	44
			<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

The principal Notifiable Diseases are Smallpox, Typhoid, Typhus, Measles, Scarlet Fever, Diphtheria, Whooping Cough, Puerperal Fever, Ophthalmia Neonatorum and Continued Fever.

There were no deaths from the Principal Notifiable Diseases during 1971.

*“Thy husband is thy Lord, thy life, thy keeper,
Thy head, thy sovereign; one that cares for thee,
And for thy maintenance commits his body
To painful labour both by sea and land,
To watch the night in storms, the day in cold,”*

Taming of the Shrew.

Shakespeare—con'd.

AGING HUMANS

The Council will be aware that in previous issues of the Annual Report I have attempted to outline the problem caused by longevity, for instance the estimated number of people in receipt of old age pensions is some eight-and-a-half million persons, and by 1990 the estimate will be twelve million.

As standards rise, in food, in homes, in life, in health, the cost will fall on fewer persons, falling, as it inevitably does, on the persons that will at that time be working. The problem will be accentuated to such a degree that we must seriously ask ourselves will it be worth it.

One can see yearly that the worker, from eighteen to sixty-five, is gradually asked to work a shorter week. Gone are the days when man worked a six day week, eight hour shifts.

Thus we already have a much shorter working week than our fathers worked say thirty years ago. Now men are asked to retire much earlier than at sixty-five, fifty-five being mooted.

This age of machines, automatons and computerization prevents masses of men from working. It will be an interesting social exercise to see which form of Government comes closer to solving this problem in the next thirty years.

Now we can readily observe people reaching retiring age of sixty-five and sixty less worn out than their forebears before them. The age of the machine has allowed them to reach the sixth age in a man's life, so aptly described by Shakespeare:

*“The sixth age shifts into the lean
and slippered pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose and pouch
on side,*

*His youthful hose well sav'd
a world too wide
For his shrunk shank; and his big
manly voice,
Turning again toward childish
treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound ",*

looking fresher, feeling younger, not worn out physically,
looking forward to retirement,

" My days are in the yellow leaf ".

It is rather ironic that as people live longer the burden of maintaining the aging will fall increasingly on fewer and fewer working persons by 1990.

The State should now order a fact finding Committee to sit and report on

" Aging Humans, What is to be done "?

Remember Beveridge describing disease, ignorance, idleness, squalor and want, the giants in the way of progress. For the aging loneliness can be overbearing, inhuman, intolerable, the winter days, dark at four-thirty in the afternoon, bring silence and solitude and complete loneliness.

*" Whilst thou liest at home, secure, and safe;
And craves no other tribute at thy hands
But love, fair looks, and true obedience;
Too little payment for so great a debt."*

*Taming of the Shrew
Shakespeare.*

In my opinion, much greater use could be made of these aging humans, work could be organised for them, making them feel that they are wanted, making them feel that they will be missed. To be wanted improves one's well being and gives one a goal, an aim in life.

Mechanically the metabolism will not run down until one is almost moribund but will remain hale and hearty, giving a desire to live. "I belong, I am still wanted."

Aging humans need not feel they are not wanted, we, the young, can do much for the aged. Let us try, the rewards we will see all around us, let us try.

" We really do care " .

Perhaps because the old, the aged, as well as the very young, take up a great deal of my time, it would be expedient if we examined the services that are available for the senior citizens of the Urban Area.

THE SIZE OF THE PROBLEM

There are eight million persons who are in receipt of old age pension, approximately five million females and three million males. This huge part of a total population of forty-eight million is brought about by the increased expectation of life, and the census figures of 1971 may well show a total of eleven million aged people in the country.

This huge number must be catered for, and their needs can be summed up as someone to talk to them, giving them advice without appearing to do so; and environmental and nutritional sufficiency. It is pleasing to see the village halls at Cwmcarn, Abercarn, Llanfach (yet to be built), Newbridge, Pantiside and Trinant being increasingly used by the senior citizens. Undoubtedly the village hall will again become the fulcrum of the educational and cultural life with the failing of the influence of the church and the going out of favour of the village institutes. Financial competence, medical nursing and domestic provision, together with recreational and occupational provisions, are also musts.

My experience has shown that the old have a strong longing to stay in their own homes, in order to keep, above all, their spirit of independence, to look at their treasures and preserve them, and to have peace and quiet, for, after all:

*" My days are in the yellow leaf :
The flowers and fruits of love are gone " .*

SERVICES

We attempt to assist these people by firstly hearing of their needs, either through the person applying for help, or through their friends, relations, neighbours, clergy, doctors, public health inspectors, and a whole host of other responsible people. In order to ascertain the type of help needed, interviews take place, either at home or at the department to obtain the assessment of help required.

Today official help is supplemented by voluntary help. Official help can either come from a national source or local

administrative source, the county council or the local council. My Council, Abercarn, are continually attempting to improve the housing accommodation for the aged. Indeed, we are building for the senior citizens of today housing units of tomorrow; compact, labour saving, centrally heated, with all modern conveniences indoors; havens of rest. We, the Council, already have eighteen housing units at Tir-y-pwll Avenue, soon to be modernised and brought up to date. There are also ten at Central Avenue, and a similar number at Railway Terrace, Abercarn.

The Council has very many two bedroomed flats in each ward:

twenty-eight at Abercarn Fach;
twenty at High Meadow;
forty at Panside; and
sixty-two at Croespenmaen,

together with several two bedroomed housing units at the top of the Pant, while housing units are at this moment being built at Edwardsville, Cwmcarn, Martin's Field, Newbridge, and a special complex is nearing completion at Trinant. Finally, a large number of senior citizens will be offered accommodation by the County Council at Panside, Newbridge.

Accommodation wise we are certainly forward looking, the schemes for taking senior citizens for holidays at the seaside resorts are expanding each year, and no aged person should be without his or her holiday.

We now ought to consider the practicality of every senior citizen in the Urban Area having one hot meal a day. I realise that this will be costly, and administratively difficult, but one hot meal a day is surely not too much to ask. Let us expand the idea of meals on wheels, until we are all satisfied that every aged person has a hot meal today, tomorrow and for ever more.

To conclude, it well may be that the Department of Social and Welfare Administration could consider the idea of providing the aged with telephones. After all the aged in very many housing units on council estates have access to internal telephones in order to speak to the warden of senior citizens complexes.

Further, it is mandatory for local authorities to provide telephones under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act, 1970. The rental could be subsidised, perhaps the installation could be made free by the General Post Office.

The aged would feel that psychologically they are not isolated. We do really care, they, the senior citizens, would not:

*“rage against the dying of the light
and would go gentle into that good night”.*

INCORRUPTIBLE

"I am no fee'd post, keep your purse."

Twelfth Night.

Shakespeare.

CAUSES OF DEATH, 1971

1970				1971	
M.	F.			M.	F.
139	75	ALL CAUSES	... ..	101	91
		Enteritis and other Diarrhoeal Diseases		1	—
		Meningococcal Infection	... ..	1	—
		Malignant Neoplasm, Stomach	...	2	1
		Malignant Neoplasm, Intestine	...	5	1
		Malignant Neoplasm, Lung, Bronchus		5	1
		Malignant Neoplasm, Breast	... ..	—	9
		Malignant Neoplasm, Uterus	... ..	—	2
		Malignant Neoplasm, Prostate	...	3	—
		Leukaemia	... ..	1	—
		Other Malignant Neoplasms	... ..	7	7
		Diabetes Mellitus	... ..	—	1
		Chronic Rheumatic Heart Disease	...	2	1
		Hypertensive Disease	... ..	6	2
		Ischaemic Heart Disease	... ..	31	27
		Other forms of Heart Disease	...	3	2
		Cerebrovascular Disease	... ..	8	16
		Other Diseases of Circulatory System		2	2
		Pneumonia	... ..	6	5
		Bronchitis and Emphysema	... ..	8	1
		Asthma	... ..	1	—
		Other Diseases of Respiratory System		2	—
		Peptic Ulcer	... ..	1	2
		Other Diseases of Digestive System	...	1	—
		Other Diseases, Genito-Urinary System		—	2
		Congenital Anomalies	... ..	—	1
		Birth Injury, Difficult Labour, etc.	...	1	—
		Other Causes of Perinatal Mortality	...	1	—
		Motor Vehicle Accidents	... ..	1	5
		All other Accidents	... ..	2	3

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD

Some four years ago, at Easter time, a lady in one of our villages was returning from work when she fell backwards, breaking her neck in the process. Quite obviously she was found to be dead on arrival at the Royal Gwent Hospital. Nothing remarkable in that you may well think.

Within a few days after this unfortunate incident, I was called into the house, owned and occupied by this lady, to inspect the same. No words of mine can adequately describe the insanitary and unwholesome conditions in which this lady had lived until her death.

The inspection showed that the bed and bedding had been severely burnt very many years before, literally hundreds and hundreds of cigarette ends were present. It was obvious that this lady had not spent any time in any one of the bedrooms for years, in point of fact she had been sleeping downstairs, sitting in a small fireside chair, and immediately alongside this was a heap of human excreta, perhaps two cwt. in extent.

We could hardly believe our eyes, as it was reasonably certain that she had defecated there for years and years.

Six Council workmen undertook to clean the house up in general, for the sum of ten pounds each. They started at 6 a.m. and had finished their task by 10 a.m., but not before two of them were violently sick.

The house that had degenerated to the condition of a pigsty is a silk purse today, perfectly repaired, decorated and improved by way of grant aid, which leaves the writer still puzzled as to why, surrounded as she was by neighbours, family and friends, no-one had even reported that something was amiss.

ANALYSIS OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN AGE GROUPS

Diseases.	Age													Total
	Unknown	65 plus	45—65	35—45	20—35	15—20	10—15	5—10	4—5	3—4	2—3	1—2	Under 1	
Tuberculosis	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Scarlet Fever	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Diphtheria	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Measles	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	12	4	7	6	2	2	35
Erysipelas	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Whooping Cough	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Puerperal Pyrexia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dysentery	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Pneumonia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Infective Hepatitis	—	—	—	—	—	1	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	5
Food poisoning	2	—	1	6	14	—	2	13	—	3	3	4	—	48
Acute Meningitis	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Total	3	—	1	7	15	—	6	29	4	10	9	7	2	93

Total number of infectious diseases in age groups: 93

" O, call back yesterday; bid time return."

Richard III.

Shakespeare.

NUMBER OF CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES
NOTIFIED DURING THE PAST FOUR YEARS

	1968	1969	1970	1971
Scarlet Fever	—	1	—	—
Dysentery	—	14	—	2
Diphtheria	—	—	—	—
Cerebral Spinal Fever ...	—	—	—	—
Pneumonia	—	—	—	—
Poliomyelitis	—	—	—	—
Meningitis	—	1	—	1
Tuberculosis	—	5	6	1
Whooping Cough	—	—	—	1
Erysipelas	—	—	—	—
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	—	—	—	—
Puerperal Pyrexia ...	—	—	—	—
Food Poisoning	—	150	58	48
Paratyphoid Fever ...	—	—	—	—
Measles	7	64	235	35
Infective Hepatitis ...	11	6	22	5
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	18	241	231	93
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

DEAR CHAMBERLAIN!

*" Out of this nettle, danger,
We pluck this flower, safety."*

*Henry IV
Shakespeare.*

INFANT WELFARE CENTRES ATTENDANCES

Attendances at the Infant Welfare Centres for the year 1971 are set out in the following table for your information:

BORN FROM 1966-70

Centre			1st Visit	Revisit	Total
Cwmcarn	...	...	184	640	824
Abercarn	...	...	128	546	674
Pantside	...	...	199	667	866
Newbridge	...	...	316	1,601	1,917
Trinant	...	...	188	1,108	1,296
			1,015	4,562	5,577

BORN DURING 1971

Centre			1st visit	Revisit	Total
Cwmcarn	...	...	46	405	451
Abercarn	...	...	51	388	439
Pantside	...	...	38	290	328
Newbridge	...	...	95	786	881
Trinant	...	...	54	543	597
			284	2,412	2,696

Attendances at the Cwmcarn Centre	...	...	451
Attendances at the Abercarn Centre	...	...	439
Attendances at the Pantside Centre	...	...	328
Attendances at the Newbridge Centre	...	...	881
Attendances at the Trinant Centre	597

Total Attendances for the year 1971	...	2,696
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SUMMARY OF TUBERCULOSIS CASES

	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Total
	M.	F.	M.	F.	
Total cases on Register					
31.12.70	45	65	3	6	119
New cases 1971 ...	—	1	—	—	1
Deaths	—	—	—	—	—
Recovered	1	—	—	—	1
Removed for other reasons	—	—	—	—	—
Removed from District	—	—	—	—	—
<hr/>					
Total cases on Register					
31.12.71	44	66	3	6	119

ANNUAL RETURN OF FOOD POISONING OUT-BREAKS IN THE AREA OF THE ABERCARN URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR 1st JANUARY TO 31st DECEMBER, 1971

In accordance with the Circular 46/49 (Wales) dated 24th May, 1949, Returns as per Memo 188/Med. (Appendix I) are submitted herewith.

ANNUAL RETURN OF FOOD POISONING NOTIFICATIONS

(corrected).

Local Authority Abercarn Urban District Council, year 1st January, 1971 to 31st December, 1971.

(2nd) FOOD POISONING NOTIFICATION CORRECTED RETURN TO R.G.

1st Qtr.	2nd Qtr.	3rd Qtr.	4th Qtr.	Total
14	16	10	8	48

(3rd) OUTBREAKS DUE TO IDENTIFIED AGENTS.

Total Outbreaks ... Nil Total Cases ... Nil

(3rd A) OUTBREAKS DUE TO SALMONELLA ORGANISMS ... Nil

(4th) OUTBREAKS OF UNDISCOVERED CAUSE.

Total Outbreaks ... 30 Total Cases ... 48

(5th) OUTBREAKS.

Single Cases	...	...	...	...	...	48
Agent Identified	...	...	...	...	...	—
Unknown Cases	...	...	...	...	...	48

Once again the department has to report failure in their attempts to identify the organism responsible for the very many separate cases notified during the year.

Very many samples of all types were obtained and submitted to the Public Health Laboratory for bacteriological confirmation, without success.

*"Is not their climate foggy, raw and dull;
On whom, as in despite, the sun looks pale,
Killing their fruits with frown."*

*Henry V
Shakespeare.*

GENERAL PROVISIONS OF THE HEALTH SERVICE

Medical Officer of Health:

Dr. K. E. Howells, M.B., B.S. (London), D.P.H.

Chief Public Health Officer:

Lloyd G. Hale, F.R.S.H.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

These services are maintained by the County Council at Cwmcarn, Abercarn, Panside, Newbridge and Trinant.

ISOLATION HOSPITALS

There are no Isolation Hospitals in the Council's Area, but arrangements have been made for Infectious Diseases cases to be admitted to the Allt-yr-yn Hospital, Newport.

IMMUNISATION AGAINST DIPHTHERIA

It is now the duty of the County Council to administer this service. This duty is performed by their Area Medical Officers.

AMBULANCE SERVICE

Under the provision of the National Health Service Act, 1946, the County Council now administer the Ambulance Service.

BACTERIOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF PATHOLOGICAL SPECIMENS

Samples of Milk, Ice-Cream, Water and samples from the Council's Swimming Baths were submitted to the Laboratory at Clytha Square, Newport, for examination during the year.

WATER SUPPLIES

The Council is a constituent Authority of the Gwent Water Board. The chief supply is obtained from Grwyne-Fawr Reservoir situated in the Black Mountains, Breconshire, and from the Llandegvedd Reservoir, subsidiary supplies are obtained from local sources. The water is of good quality

and large supplementary quantities were obtained from the Llanover Scheme. The water is sampled by the Board, and from time to time by the Local Authority (who submitted samples for bacteriological examination). Where necessary the supplies were chlorinated by the Board's Officials.

Number of houses with piped supply ...	6,398
Number of houses supplied from wells and springs (estimated)	10
Approximate population supplied from Public Water Mains, direct to house ...	18,442

During the year inspections were made of water supplies and systems generally, where the pressure was reported to be low. Upon inspection it was found that in almost all cases the corrosion of pipes was responsible for inadequate supplies for all domestic purposes. In such cases, Informal Notices, and where necessary Statutory Notices, under Section 138 of the Public Health Act, 1936, were served with complete success.

SEWERS AND DRAINS

The Council is a constituent Member of the Western Valley Sewerage Board. The Council's subsidiary sewers are connected to the Main Trunk Sewer.

SCAVENGING

Scavenging is carried out by direct labour with a twice weekly collection, the tip being situated at Hafodyrynys.

REFUSE DISPOSAL

Regular inspections in connection with Rodent Control and Fly Breeding have been carried out, and extensive treatments for the elimination of rodents and flies are continually being undertaken.

BACTERIOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF WATER SUPPLIES, MILK AND ICE-CREAM

A total of two hundred and seventeen samples were submitted for bacteriological examination during the year, twenty-three milk, one hundred and sixty-nine water, and twenty-five ice-cream.

The milk samples were purchased off vendors in the course of delivery to the consumers, at school canteens and factory canteens.

The water samples were taken from landsprings, such as are at the Colliery Road, Cwmcarn, and near Pennar Villa, New Bethel, the Council's swimming baths and certain supply taps in factories and schools in the Area. All samples submitted proved to be satisfactory.

In addition to submitting samples from all the above mentioned places, all of which proved to be satisfactory, very many samples were obtained from Penyfan Pond.

Not unnaturally, the bacteriological standard of this water was found to be somewhat different, not having been filtered or chlorinated the water obviously contained bacteria usually associated with animal manural pollution.

There is no question that this water is eminently suitable for the usage the Council have in mind.

*“ Water, water, everywhere,
And not a drop to drink.”*

Ancient Mariner.

WATER SUPPLIES

The department, as everyone knows, has a duty to sample water from time to time, for bacteriological purposes.

The samples are obtained from house taps, spouts, pipes, springs, schools and factories. This sampling is a continual and continuing duty.

The Committee will recall that because of their real concern in regard to the purity of the water in Penyfan Pond very many samples were taken and submitted for bacteriological examination, with pleasing results.

Further samples are obtained by the Gwent Water Board and again submitted for bacteriological and chemical analysis.

I wonder is enough being done on the research and chemical side? Are our water supplies safe to **drink**, or because of their very softness is lead being taken up in solution, a condition known as plumbo solvency.

This soft Welsh water being forced along the service supply pipes under pressure creates a friction between the water and the lead pipes taking up minute quantities of lead in solution.

I wonder if this ingestion of minute quantities of lead coupled with the inhalation of lead from the atmosphere is or will be deleterious to health.

Our water is a soft water, soft and smooth, in which sodium is present, this sodium in turn may affect the water if it is present to too great a degree.

A large part of London's domestic water supply is taken from the Thames and supplemented by water from deep artesian wells. A cruel, hard water, making it difficult to form a lather when using soap, and leaving a scum on the inside of the bath and wash-hand basin, as well as causing furring to kettles and other water heaters.

Keen students of Public Health Preventative Medicine may well find, with urgent and patient research, the answer which has so far eluded the most fastidious of us, and may well find the answer as to why the death rate by diseases of

the heart is greater in Wales than in England, drinking minute particles of lead, in solution, coupled with inhalation of lead present in the air, could adversely affect certain age groups more than others. Naturally long and costly research will give us these answers.

The time to begin is now, time awaits no man.

THE CLEAN AIR ACT, 1956

The picture of Dickensian London is familiar to us all. Thick smogs, dirty, grimy buildings and smoke billowing from low lying chimney stacks.

Coupled with other characteristics of that era such as residential density, lack of piped water and lack of a proper drainage and sewerage system, is it any wonder that diseases such as Tuberculosis, Typhoid Fever and Cholera were as common as measles is today?

Large studies have been made since that time to overcome these social problems one by one and in 1953 a Committee was set up under the Chairmanship of Sir Hugh Beaver:—

“To examine the nature, causes and effects of air pollution and the efficacy of present preventive measures; to consider what further preventive measures are practicable; and to make recommendations”.

The setting up of this Committee followed the London smog of December 1952, which resulted in the deaths of four thousand people, the majority of which were elderly, very young or persons with a history of respiratory illness.

Staggering facts were uncovered by the Beaver Committee, apart from the physical effects of air pollution, the economic effects were tremendous, estimated at around one hundred to one hundred and fifty million pounds per annum, these were broken down into two headings:

DIRECT COSTS

including laundry, cleaning, painting, corrosion of metals, lighting and medical costs;

LOSS OF EFFICIENCY

including damage to soil, crops, animals and reduced human efficiency due to illness.

These estimates do not include items such as wastage of fuel, to which it is difficult to give any monetary value.

It was obvious then, that an act to clean up the emissions from chimneys was essential and in 1956, the Clean Air Act came onto the Statute Book, this Act followed, almost to a letter, the recommendations of the Beaver Committee.

Sweeping changes were made in industry as well as in domestic premises, for example it became an offence for an industrial chimney to emit dark or black smoke, except in very extreme conditions.

New furnaces over certain ratings could not be installed without the Local Authority being notified and where certain fuels are being burned, equipment for minimising grit and dust emissions had to be installed.

On the domestic scene too, Local Authorities were empowered to designate areas as Smoke Control Areas in which only approved fuels could be burned, unless the grates were such that any fuel could be burned smokelessly. Garden bonfires which gave rise to nuisances could be dealt with.

The results of this Act can now be seen, particularly in cities like London and Liverpool, civic buildings, having been cleaned and given a face lift, now remain clean longer. Smogs such as the devastating one in London which prompted the legislation are now rare, and vegetation has now returned to its former shade of green where previously it had been an off-yellow.

Social changes are also helping to clean up the air, increased use of gas and electricity, particularly in the pottery industry where smoke was a trademark, increase in the use of smokeless solid fuel for domestic central heating and the recognition by industry that the job of boilerman is a skilled trade and as such better salaries are offered for men who have attended a recognised course in this field.

In the future we will see greater strides in minimising pollution from internal combustion engines, perhaps even the banning of the automobile from city centres where at low speeds and in traffic jams, dangerous concentrations of pollutants such as lead build up and cause danger to health.

The Clean Air Act, 1956 and subsequent Acts are important pieces of social legislation which make our country a better place in which to live, London may still be called "The Smoke", but this term no longer has any factual backing.

"I am determined to prove a villain."

*Richard III
Shakespeare.*

NATIONAL COAL BOARD

COAL BLENDING PLANT—NEWBRIDGE

In October 1971 a plant for blending coal was set up on the southern side of the North Celynen Colliery site at Newbridge. The plant was designed to receive and blend coal from two sources, one at Abertillery and one at Markham. From both these sites, the coal is conveyed by lorries, often overloaded and spilling coal over the roads, to Newbridge where it is dumped on site and blended.

The coal is then removed by conveyor belt to lorries where it is taken, again overloaded and spilling lorries, to Rogerstone and Uskmouth power stations. It is estimated that up to five thousand tons of coal can be dealt with in this way weekly although this figure is not often obtained.

SITUATION

The plant is sited on a fairly high piece of land in clear view of everyone, perhaps if the site were a little more inconspicuous the plant would be out of sight and out of mind, I understand that the Coal Board now intend to plant trees to screen along the western side, for the whole length of the plant and railway sidings.

DUST PROBLEMS

Local housewives, particularly in the North Road area, have very rightly complained of the increase in dust fallout since the plant has been operational. This dust falls on window ledges, washing on clothes lines and footpaths, from where it is trodden into the house.

Complaints have been received by this department about the dust fallout and to compile enough evidence to prove that the plant was causing a nuisance, two hundred and fifty pounds was spent by the Council on purchasing equipment to measure the dust. The apparatus is examined monthly by a consultant analytical chemist at a fee of twenty-six guineas per month and his comments and recommendations are accepted by the Council.

So far, however, results have been disappointing, there has been very little consistency in the figures. At periods when fallout ought to have been low, i.e. Christmas holidays and during the Miners' Strike, this did not reflect itself in the results.

As Officers of the Council, it is our duty to recommend prosecutions, only when sufficient evidence has been compiled to prove that a nuisance exists beyond all doubt. So far this has not been possible.

To gain further evidence and to attempt to arrive at a background pollution reading the apparatus has now been removed to three sites in Cwmcarn. These readings it is hoped will be sufficiently low in comparison to North Road that it will immediately be obvious that there is a high rate of dust fallout at Newbridge.

POSSIBLE SOURCES OF DUST NUISANCE

The coal being blended contains a large amount of fines, the wind from the south-east hits the top of the coal heap and dust is carried to North Road. Additionally, there is a large amount of dust on the roads around the site, this is disturbed by lorries using the road and again is blown into Newbridge.

Overloading of lorries, both inward and outward, also causes annoyance, particularly when spillage can be seen falling from lorries passing through the village. During wet weather, the roads around the plant become wet and the dirt and dust clings to the wheels of vehicles using the plant. This is carried onto the road and again causes annoyance.

WORKS CARRIED OUT BY NATIONAL COAL BOARD TO MINIMISE NUISANCE

The dust roadways around the coal dump are now watered regularly to minimise disturbance by vehicles and after consultations with the National Coal Board a full-time road-sweeper is employed to keep the concrete accommodation road to the site clean and to prevent lorries carrying dirt and mud onto the Council's road.

CONCLUSIONS

Measurements are continuing at the pollution stations in order to gain sufficient evidence to take the case to court. The Council are holding meetings with the National Coal Board and the matter is continually under discussion, and improvements in the conditions are being sought, perhaps eventually the resiting of the entire plant will be considered, thus nullifying all further complaints.

Meanwhile, the Council have at their disposal the expertise of scientists from the Warren Spring Laboratory who specialise in air pollution and its control. Every effort is being made to minimise the pollution from this site.

EQUALITY

*"I think the king is but a man, as I am;
The violet smells to him as it doth to me."*

*Henry V.
Shakespeare.*

RAINFALL

The table shows the monthly rainfall, also the day of the month when the greatest fall occurred.

Month	Total Inches of Rainfall	Greatest fall in 24 hrs. Day	Inches	No. of days of Recorded Rainfall
January ...	9.92	21	1.45	17
February ...	1.84	13	0.72	6
March ...	2.51	18	0.60	8
April ...	2.85	17	1.25	5
May ...	2.63	22	1.48	4
June ...	3.88	19	0.65	12
July ...	2.82	28	0.59	7
August ...	5.59	15	0.86	9
September	1.24	30	0.62	3
October ...	5.71	19	1.51	9
November ...	3.32	21	1.04	7
December ...	2.43	2	0.63	6
Total ...	44.74	—	—	93

Rainfall is recorded at Abercarn Cemetery.

Height above Sea Level: 539.9 feet.

" We must maintain our housing stocks."

Almost all that can be said about house improvements, articles having been written on the subject of house modernisation schemes for over twenty years.

A short corollary shows that local authorities were given powers to improve houses for the first time in the Housing Act, 1949. Here a bathroom only could be built to house a bath, wash-hand basin and an indoor toilet. The applicant was paid a maximum of four hundred pounds or half the cost if the improvements cost less.

Progress over the intervening ten years to 1959 was steady, satisfying up to a point, although the scheme did not set the country alight. Applications from owners were conspicuous by their absence, during this ten years. Perhaps they felt that their return on the capital laid out on these house improvements did not bring enough financial reward; it was eight per cent per annum at this time.

In 1959 the Government gave local authorities power to convert disused bedrooms into bathrooms. Because the rooms were already there a lesser amount of money was given, one hundred and fifty-five pounds or half the cost if the amenities were fitted for less than three hundred and ten pounds.

In 1964 a further Housing Act gave local authorities power to declare whole areas Improvement Areas. Abercarn soon took advantage of these powers and declared Jamesville, Cwmcarn, and Main Street, Torlais Street and Grove Street, Newbridge Improvement Areas, much to the delight of the tenants.

The Government has not overlooked the fact that landlords and landladies were still rather reticent in applying for Improvement Grants for their rented houses, although the capital return had been raised from eight per cent to twelve-and-a-half per cent per annum.

In 1969 another new Housing Act gave local authorities powers not only to improve houses within their area, but also to have substantial items of disrepair remedied, providing the cost of remedying these defects did not outweigh the cost of the improvements.

The maximum grant had now been increased to between four hundred and one thousand pounds, and in 1971 was

increased to one thousand, five hundred pounds. Standard Grants had moved from three hundred and ten to three hundred and fifty pounds, to four hundred and fifty to six hundred and seventy-five pounds in certain circumstances. Such generous terms brought a veritable flood of applications up and down the country, and particularly in the Abercarn Urban Area.

Since June 1971 some six hundred applications have been received and dealt with. It would not be an exaggeration to say that these applicants will receive between them a total of six hundred thousand pounds.

Over thirty firms are currently working in the Area on improvements, employing well over one hundred craftsmen.

In conclusion, there is no sign of the applications slowing down. The department, in conjunction with the Housing Engineer's Department, are urgently examining ways whereby the procedure can again be streamlined, and these ideas will, in the next few weeks, be put into practice, in order to prevent undue loss of time.

While the above makes interesting reading, some other figures do also :

Roofs generally overhauled ...	...	...	105
Eaves guttering repaired ...	...	...	62
Back yards totally relaid ...	...	...	117
Doors and frames renewed ...	...	...	282
Floors completely renewed ...	...	...	223
Wall plastering renewed ...	...	...	216
Ceilings renewed ...	...	...	115
Window frames renewed ...	...	...	508
Grates taken out in bedrooms ...	...	...	173
Power points placed in bedrooms ...	...	...	314

The list of individual improvements is naturally endless, three-quarters of the cost paid for by the Council, this must be the bargain of all time. We are only sorry we do not give Green Shield Stamps as well!

*"She sits like patience on a monument,
Smiling at Grief."*

Twelfth Night.

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD

A lady called to see me one Friday afternoon, old Hale is never effervescent at this time, wishing to apply for an Improvement Grant. I enquired whether she had a bath, wash-hand basin or indoor toilet, or whether she had any rising damp. I was getting anxious by now, as the answer to all these questions was that she had all the amenities, and no problem with rising damp, but promised to call at her house and inspect it, and also give her advice on a possible application.

Anticipating trouble, or rather difficulty, my assistant accompanied me. The visit showed an immaculate home, absolutely lovely, with nothing wrong at all. Nevertheless, the lady and her husband, together with myself and my assistant, ended up on the landing, taking up the carefully fitted carpet, looking for non-existent woodworm.

Naturally no woodworm was found. We left on a sad note of regret feeling sorry for the lady, who had tried so hard and failed so miserably to improve her palace.

We have waited in vain for this lady to call at the office to say she has one hundred pounds worth of woodworm.

" I dreamt I dwelt in marble halls."

HOUSING

The department is disappointed that the year has come to its end without a physical start being made in the redevelopment of the Ranks site at Abercarn, the redevelopment of Croespenmaen, and last, but not least, the redevelopment of the Arcon Bungalows site at Pentwynmawr.

Although time is not in our favour, as time is running out before amalgamation takes place, it is imperative that a start be made before this amalgamation, or these schemes may not take priority with the newly formed council. Each month these three vital schemes are delayed increases the costs. It does not need a man wise in the workings of economics to tell us that the day of renting a house, either in the public or private sector, cheaply is gone forever.

Hundreds of thousands of privately owned houses in all parts of the country have for years been rented out at a controlled rent, controlled under the Rent Restriction and Mortgages Act, 1914, which because of the war came into force in 1920. The landlords or landladies did not have a rent increase until the Rent Act, 1957. In our Area this average increase was only six shillings per week, a pitiful pittance, and even then the owner could only get this amount if the property was in a reasonable state of repair, having regard to its age, location and character.

The Housing Act of 1969 was a serious attempt to deal with this sector of housing, other acts since having given support to the start of decontrolling property up and down the country. The Housing Act, 1971, the Fair Deal for Housing, 1971, and the Finance Act, 1972 all support the Act of 1969 and reinforce some of the more ambiguous Sections.

" The walls of Jericho came tumbling down."

Reflecting back over a period of twenty years of masterly inactivity, the Council have had a little over four hundred houses demolished. It would be no exaggeration to say that if we had had the power at least two hundred of these houses would have been saved, two hundred at today's prices for building new council housing units at six thousand pounds per unit, a total of one million, two hundred thousand pounds. Of course we must preserve our housing stocks, applicants for grants are getting the bargain of a lifetime.

The Council too are getting a bargain of a lifetime, spending only an estimated six hundred thousand pounds, in a little over fourteen months, preserving six hundred houses for a further thirty years.

The Government too must be well satisfied with the national figures of houses improved. Last year seventy-seven million pounds was spent on preserving the nations housing stocks. The Government also got the bargain of a political lifetime.

Hence the greatest facelift ever is in the process of taking place in the country — improvements, improvements and improvements.

“ We must preserve our housing stocks.”

Hence the large discretionary grants available, improving and repairing old houses, giving them a further useful life of thirty years.

The policy should be resolved nationally :

- (1) demolish the obviously bad houses;
- (2) improve and repair wherever possible,

“ we must preserve our housing stocks ”.

“ Silk purses out of sows’ ears.”

Come to Wales on a wet, cold, windy day, come and see the endless rows of dressed stone, two storeyed, terraced houses, with their sound, solid, grey/blue Welsh slates dripping wet. Stepping inside these castles is like turning a sow’s ear into a silk purse. The soaking from the pitiless Welsh rain is worthwhile, another house will soon be perfectly repaired and modernised. Another silk purse made from a sow’s ear. More than another statistic in the book, more than just another house improved, more even than a house, its a Welsh home, a Welsh modernised home, another house preserved, as part of the national effort to preserve our housing stocks.

*" Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head;
And this our life exempt from public haunt,
Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones and good in everything."*

As You Like It.

Shakespeare.

A QUESTION OF FITNESS

During the year under review, especially the latter part of the year after 23rd June, 1971, to be precise, the Council has been inundated with applications and enquiries appertaining to Improvement Grants; the hours are long, day in, day out, but have you ever seen the look on a person's face when you advise him that no longer will he have to take a bucket of water with him when he goes on a route march to the lavatory at the bottom of the garden.

An indoor toilet, why! he just cannot wait to use it. Hot water, a constant supply, why, boy bach, every drop of water was from the gas stove before, a b..... fortune, I spent on boiling water. A bath or shower in a separate room, gone are the days of bathing by the coal fire, one leg at a time. That day is gone forever, and there's more besides, we'll take up those wet, damp flagstones in each room on the ground floor, worn into convex conformation with the passage of busy feet over seventy years of wear.

So we wrote it down, the list grew and grew, the cost too rose to around sixteen hundred pounds, four hundred to the applicant, twelve hundred to the Council. We will give you twelve hundred pounds, the look on his face at such a gift makes weariness vanish, it is rewarding and intensely satisfying. We are pleasing everybody:

- (1) the applicant;
- (2) the Council;
- (3) the Ministry;
- (4) we are preserving our housing stocks giving them a minimum of thirty added years of life,

and making this part of Wales fit for heroes to live in.

The average cost of over one thousand, three hundred pounds per house is money well spent when one considers that these dwellings, prior to improvement, were in the twilight category. That condemnation, while easy, under the vast powers given to local authorities to deal with such cases, in the long run can prove costly, a replacement dwelling, built to Parker, Morris standard, costing over six thousand pounds, at today's prices that is equal to four Improvement Grants.

One thing is absolutely certain, to build new housing units, either publicly or privately, for sale or letting, i.e. renting is a costly business. One thing is certain, the day of living in privately owned, or publicly owned, rented houses cheaply is gone forever.

"To preserve our housing stocks", this must be so. Undoubtedly the Census figures of 1971 will reveal startling statistics of the number of persons owning houses in the Urban Area who live alone. Under-occupation of housing accommodation, accommodation afforded, five rooms plus a kitchenette, occupied, say two rooms, the owners invariably being old, living in straightened circumstances, struggling to save more money than last year for their rates, struggling to buy "black diamonds" which is nearly as dear as diamonds. To shop for food is an ordeal, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. butter please, mixed with margarine, a pot of paste, $5\frac{1}{2}$ new pence for $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz. (wish I had a ton to sell myself). Yes life is hard, cruelly hard, in the evening of one's life.

Let us then be good samaritans, let us purchase quite fairly these houses, let us sell them at no profit or loss to the Council, to young families most of whom are on the Council's housing lists in any case.

The aged would receive an unexpected windfall late in life, the Council could rehouse these aged persons in special houses for these senior citizens of the Area; no longer would they have to buy a miserable lamb chop, price sixteen new pence, they would be independent, easily affording the little extra titbits as their fancy takes them.

No longer would they be faced with endless questions from that nicely named Ministry of Social Security, what did you call them, Hale, the bloody board of guardians, boyo!

Let us try out this idea, I am sure that once the scheme is underway we would get a ready response. The new, young owner/occupier would borrow the purchase price by way of mortgage, then obtain a second mortgage for his part pay-

ment of an Improvement Grant. He may be lucky and even get one thousand, five hundred pounds as a gift to improve and repair his house.

We are preserving our housing stocks further within the Urban Area, in fact, everybody is laughing, the old former owner, he is well looked after, he or she has money to give them a real sense of security. The young owner/occupier is happy, and the parents of the above. The Councillors and the much maligned Council staff are happy.

Yes sir, the job, this job, is well worthwhile.

THE DAWNING

*“ Had I but served my God with half the zeal
I served my king, he would not in my age
Have left me naked to mine enemies.”*

*Wolsey — Henry VIII
Shakespeare.*

The following complaints were received during the year and remedied, these are set out for your information:

EXTERIOR	1971
Chimney stacks repaired or rebuilt	123
Chimney stacks sealed off	113
Roofs repaired or renewed	80
Rainwater pipes and eaves gutters renewed or repaired	140
Walls—rebuilt or repaired or repointed	20
rendered for prevention of dampness	135
external rendering repaired	31
damp proof courses inserted	91
Outbuildings repaired	14
Obstructive outbuildings demolished	36
Yards, passages, etc., paved or repaired	138
INTERIOR	
Doors and frames renewed or repaired	242
Floors renewed or repaired	181
Floors ventilated	—
Grates taken out, apertures sealed up	113
Grates renewed or repaired	147

Internal wall plastering repaired or renewed ...	175
Internal ceiling plastering repaired or renewed ...	95
Staircases repaired or renewed ...	21
Windows and frames renewed or repaired ...	426
Window cords renewed ...	14

DRAINAGE

New drains constructed ...	3
Drains cleansed ...	280
Drains reconstructed ...	342
Drains repaired ...	233
Gullies fixed ...	181
Inspection chambers provided or repaired ...	20
Lavatory basins or bath waste pipes trapped or repaired ...	55
Soil pipes or ventilation shafts fixed or repaired ...	89
Waste water sinks trapped or waste pipes repaired ...	319

WATER CLOSETS

Water closet buildings repaired ...	36
Seats, doors renewed or repaired ...	49
Water closets reconstructed ...	1
New W. C. pans and traps fixed ...	15
Flushing apparatus provided ...	24
Flushing Apparatus repaired ...	7

MISCELLANEOUS REPAIRS AND NUISANCES ABATED

Storage accommodation provided or improved ...	119
Water supply provided or renewed ...	9
Water taps or pipes repaired ...	14
Fascia boards renewed or repaired ...	219
Skirting boards renewed or repaired ...	59
Waste water sinks provided ...	18
Joints raked out and repointed ...	1
Power points fitted in bedrooms ...	232
Electrical rewiring carried out ...	29
Other repairs and nuisances abated ...	23

Total ...	4,722
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FOND REGARD

*"He was but as the cuckoo is in June
A fellow of no mark, nor likelihood."*

*Henry IV
Shakespeare.*

GENERAL IMPROVEMENT AREA—NEWBRIDGE

In addition to receiving individual applications for Improvement Grants the department is also engaged in carrying out surveys, inspections and giving advice to owner/occupiers who live within the General Improvement Area.

Since the Council declared Trecelyn a General Improvement Area, Mr. Workman and myself have spent as much time as is possible there, having regard to our other duties, and it is just as well to examine the progress that has been made in the meanwhile.

Number of houses in the General Improvement Area	...	...	...	...	...	...	341
Number already improved	...	...	...	...	...	...	132
Number owned by National Coal Board, already improved	...	...	...	...	...	...	36
Number owned by National Coal Board, not improved	...	...	...	...	...	...	116
Number of applications received since declaration of General Improvement Area in process of being improved	...	...	...	...	...	...	20
Total number of houses already improved or in the process of being improved	...	...	...	...	...	...	152
Total number of houses to be improved	...	...	...	...	...	...	189

Of course, Members will realise that this General Improvement Area cannot be completed before about June, 1974, and in choosing this date I am not thinking of the possibility of the grant reverting to one half or one thousand pounds, but the real human factors such as that of the owner/occupier who is seventy-three years of age and living with her sister-in-law of ninety-three, and who has no desire to improve her home even at bargain prices.

Another stumbling block is the National Coal Board, owning as they do one hundred and fifty-two houses within

the General Improvement Area which are still without modern amenities. Not only are the National Coal Board by their attitude of non-cooperation depriving their tenants, most of whom are elderly, of the luxury of constant running hot water, a bath or shower in a separate room, and an indoor toilet, but these tenants must still degrade themselves by bathing in tin baths, with the curtains drawn. Nor is this all, the tenants still have to suffer the inconvenience of flagstone floors, damp, dank, open jointed flagstones, continually breaking the floor covering, why, it must cost the tenants a fortune in floor covering in their lifetimes.

These houses have had little or no substantial repair for years, and it is hardly proper for me to single out one house owned by the Board from a total of one hundred and fifty-two, however, I must mention the case of No. 43 Hill Street. Here, after much prompting by the department, the Board finally faced up to its obligations and did some remedial work to the house. Why, they even gave the tenant a new door, magnificently primed in pink primer, but left in this condition, which cannot have been an oversight, but still the tenant is grateful and does not complain. I invite anybody to see this door, and at the same time to look at the external sill of the front sitting room, which is almost completely rotted away.

It is time, surely, that the Board realised they have a legal responsibility to keep their houses in a good state of repair; we dare not ask them about their moral responsibility in this matter. Everyone knows that the Board can claim three-quarters of the cost of all improvements and repairs, up to one thousand, five hundred pounds per house, assuming that there is two thousand pounds spent on each house.

It well may be that the Council will decide to serve Notices upon the Board, either under the Public Health Act, 1936, or the Housing Act, 1957 as amended by the Housing Act, 1969. Conversely, the Council may decide to compel the Board to sell these houses to the Council under their powers within the Compulsory Purchase Procedures in the Housing Act, 1957.

SANS EVERYTHING

*“ Words, words, mere words
No matter from the heart.”*

Troilus.

HOUSING

Number of dwelling houses inspected	1,572
Re-inspected	814
Number of premises at which repairs and improvements have been carried out	1,319
Warning Notices	309
Remedied without Notice	1,114
Statutory Notices served	351
Statutory Notices complied with	320
Statutory Notices not complied with	31
Number of houses in the Area	6,408
Number of dwelling houses erected during the year by the Council	4
Number of new houses erected privately in the year 1971	42
	(approx.)

DRAINAGE

Drainage stoppages dealt with, new drainage connections, improvements and repairs 342

The following statement is in the form prescribed by the Ministry :

1. Inspection of dwelling houses during the year :—

(1) (a) Total number of dwelling houses inspected during the year for housing defects (under Public Health and Housing Acts)	1,572
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose	1,812
(2) (a) Demolition Orders made	8
(b) Closing Orders made	9
(3) Undertakings accepted not to re-let for human habitation	2
(4) Closing Orders revoked after premises have been made fit	1

2.	Remedying of Defects during the year without Service of Formal Notices :	
	Number of dwelling houses rendered fit for occupation in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers ...	419
3.	(a) Proceedings under Section 9 and 10 of the Housing Act, 1957	---
	(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repair	351
	(2) Number of dwelling houses which were rendered fit after service of Formal Notice :	
	(a) By owners	320
	(b) By Local Authority in default of owners	---
	Number of houses under Circular 2854 ...	—
	(b) Proceedings under Public Health Acts :—	
	(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Notices were served requiring repair	95
	(2) Number of dwelling houses which were rendered fit	95
	(a) By owners	95
	(b) By Local Authority in Default of owners	---
	(c) Proceedings under Section 16 and 17 of the Housing Act, 1957 :—	
	(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made ...	8
	(2) Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders ...	3
	(d) Proceedings under Section 18 of the Housing Act, 1957 :—	
	(1) Number of separate tenements or under ground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenements or rooms having been rendered fit	—

4.	Housing Act, 1957—Part IV. Overcrowding.	
(a)	(1) Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year	16
	(2) Number of families dwelling therein ...	19
	(3) Number of persons dwelling therein ...	65
(b)	Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year	2
5.	Housing Act, 1957—Clearance Areas.	
(a)	Clearance Areas made during the year ...	1
(b)	Number of houses involved in Clearance Areas	4

BANKRUPT

*"You may my glories and my state dispose
But not my griefs; still am I King of those."*

*Richard II
Shakespeare.*

MEAT AND FOOD INSPECTION

It goes without saying that much time, and a great deal of effort, goes into making a Meat and Food Inspector.

Any person qualified in this way would not be worth his salt if he did not care keenly about this aspect of his work, and it is because of his keen eye, his powers of observation and knowledge, that the notifiable cases of food poisoning run only at a yearly average of eight thousand in England and Wales.

Just think of one fact — there are fifty million people in the country, let us say that each person uses one hundred cans of foodstuff per year, five thousand million as a total, each being a potential source of food poisoning.

Is it not remarkable that by the excellent work of food inspectors up and down the country the number of food poisoning cases are contained at eight thousand per year.

The Council, of course, will be familiar with the history of meat inspection since the war. The requisition of all slaughterhouses or abbatoirs during the war had at least two important effects; making the output easier to control from a rationing point, and the upgrading of the standard of meat inspection. Reflect for a moment — every carcass of meat, both beef and lamb, plus all pigs, were free of any disease, and of equal importance was the fact that all offal was also free from disease or any other condition.

There was, as a result of very tight Governmental control, one hundred per cent meat inspection. Animal husbandry was also magnificently upgraded. The insistence, since 1946, that all milk should be pasteurised was beginning to show a downward trend in regard to milk borne diseases. Mass inoculation of all cattle, together with the immediate slaughter of all reactors helped considerably in the fight against tuberculosis in the human.

In 1954 this important government work received a severe setback, slaughterhouses or abbatoirs were decon-

trolled, with little or no worthwhile law to enforce standards, and this saw the opening up of over four thousand generally small slaughterhouses throughout the country, very many being the back yard type. Killings at these establishments took place at deliberately inconvenient hours, usually late at night. The owners knew that they only had to notify their intention to slaughter, and after three hours they could remove the animal, without inspection, to the butcher's shop. Such impositions were enough to damage the ardour of the most fastidious meat inspector.

We had two such places within our Area, while many far flung rural districts had as many as nineteen small slaughterhouses in their areas, making a full meat inspection impossible. These were then, the days, the hay days, of the unscrupulous, the day of the get rich quick operator.

While the meat inspector did his best and shook his head in disbelief, the Government at this time were not as moribund as some of the cattle brought in to the back yard slaughterhouses. In 1959 a welter of legislation came into force; a new and exacting standard for slaughterhouses; new standards against the cruelty to animals before and during slaughter were insisted upon; and new and exacting food hygiene standards, which came into force in January 1956, were beginning to bite.

These back yard slaughterhouses began to disappear almost as quickly as they appeared. Animal husbandry had made great strides, and tuberculosis became almost as rare as in the human. Not unlike mankind the housing of cattle had improved beyond all recognition, so much so that cattle were now arriving in prime condition for slaughter.

Our greatest expectations were exceeded, one hundred per cent meat inspection was insisted upon, and why not, if prevention is better than cure, providing positive proof that such inspections are more than beneficial.

It must not be forgotten that it is the public health inspectors, not the veterinary officer or the weights and measures inspector, or other notables in local government, awaiting a chance to score at the expense of the meat inspector over the last two decades, who built up a service and inter-related conditions which can only be equalled throughout the world. Surely we are not to surrender these hard, well won gains by our entry into the Common Market.

Entry into the vast European market should not be used

as a means of lowering the standards mentioned above. Britain, it must be remembered, is the largest importer of meat in the world. The Government must resolve not to allow any meat or offal into the country unless it is marked with its country of origin, the carcass being properly inspected.

MEAT AND OTHER FOODS

A large quantity of tinned and other foods were inspected during the year. The following articles were condemned as being unfit for human consumption:—

197 lb. cooked ham;	2 bottles sauce;
113 tins baked beans;	4 jars beetroot;
89 tins corned beef;	6 tins curried beans;
70 lb. corned beef;	3 trays roast leg of pork;
18 tins cooked ham;	3 trays braised ox hearts;
108 tins peas;	24 tins grapefruit juice;
14 lb. cheese;	2 trays of beef and kidney
6 lb. bacon;	pies;
16 tins pears;	144 bars chocolate
5 jars jam;	(discoloured);
142 tins luncheon meat;	4 trays poached haddock;
51 tins stewed steak;	4 roast topside;
32 tins peaches;	4 chicken ham pies;
5 tins strawberries;	18 lb. ox tongue;
4 tins butterbeans;	24 lb. luncheon meat;
12 tins ox tongue;	5 lb. sausage;
2 jars pickles;	10 lb. braised beef;
67 tins milk;	6 tins salmon;
6 lb. tongue;	37 lb. liver;
26 chickens;	3 tins oranges;
3 tins soup;	16 lb. lamb;
17 sponges;	3 tins cooked prime
20 lb. butter;	shoulder of ham;
81 tins tomatoes;	4 tins raspberries;
6 tins minced meat;	3 steak pies;
4 cartons braised steak;	2 jam sponges.
4 apple tarts;	

" Coal in a shop—Never!"
" Bottled sunshine for sale "
" Black Diamonds "

FOOD HYGIENE

A few years ago one of our supermarkets started to sell coal in bags. They had this coal in twenty-eight pound bags to the left of the door as you entered, soft steam coal, four shillings and three pence per bag, seventeen pounds a ton, the local coal merchants were then selling coal for ten pounds per ton. Not a bad profit for the supermarket.

Coal in a food shop, this was never synonymous with food hygiene. Quickly I had a few careful words with the General Manager, who told me they were more than satisfied with the sales, very many people asking for coal to be sent up with their weekly orders.

At that time I was not aware of any section of any act governing the sale of coal in a food shop, neither could I readily think of any regulation that could bring about the withdrawal of the sale of coal.

I had words with the late Clerk of Mynyddislwyn a man with enormous experience in the law and lore of local government. Here I drew a blank.

The Weights and Measures Department of the County Council knew of no law to stop this undesirable, unhygienic practice. Indeed, the spokesman for the Department stated that he had just returned from holiday, the weather being so inhospitable as to require him to purchase coal for evening warmth. He bought the coal in a food shop!

I thought of my days as a miner, I thought of my many friends labouring below, labouring without mercy, labouring without dignity and little reward. I sought and obtained another interview with the General Manager, and informed him that if he did not withdraw the sale of coal, the four collieries in the area would come out on strike. The result, immediate withdrawal.

*" I hath no delight to pass away the time,
Unless it is to discant on mine own misery."*

*Richard III
Shakespeare*

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD

Three years ago a person in the employ of the Council was locking up, checking that all doors were secure at the end of his working day, and in slamming the last door accidentally shut it on two of his fingers.

" Damn it ", he said, shaking his hand and blowing his fingers. Thinking he had blackened them he looked at his fingers only to find that the tops were no longer there. One of the ends was between the door jamb and the door, the other was on the floor. He picked up the ends of his fingers, wrapped them up, and went to see his doctor.

Producing his finger ends he asked the doctor, a qualified surgeon, to stitch them back on. The doctor threw them into the waste paper basket, stating that he would have no further need of them.

The point of telling the story is that the Council did not report this accident to the Factories Inspector, as under the Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act, 1963, as they are obliged to do.

I wonder how many accidents occur in offices, shops and railway premises which are never reported to local authorities, this is an obligation under the Act of 1963. Surely the idea of notification brings about an investigation. The investigation may show a complete disregard for the safety measures set down in the Act as a safeguard to personnel employed in offices, shops and railway premises. It is the responsibility of all public spirited persons to report these accidents in order that safety standards can not only be maintained but improved.

TABLE A. REGISTRATIONS AND GENERAL INSPECTIONS.

(1) Class of Premises.	(2) Number of premises registered during the year.	(3) Total number of registered premises at end of year.	(4) Number of registered premises receiving a general inspection during the year.
Offices	3	48	26
Retail Shops	5	100	94
Wholesale departments, warehouses	1	25	24
Catering establishments open to the Public, canteens	—	8	8
Fuel Storage depots	1	1	1

TABLE B. NUMBER OF VISITS OF ALL KINDS BY INSPECTOR TO REGISTERED PREMISES.

TABLE C. ANALYSIS OF PERSONS EMPLOYED IN
REGISTERED PREMISES BY WORKPLACE

Class of Workplace (1)	Number of persons employed. (2)
Offices	318
Retail shops	304
Wholesale departments, warehouses	63
Catering establishments open to the public	60
Canteens	—
Fuel Storage depots	2
Total	747
Total Males	360
Total Females	387

TABLE D. EXEMPTIONS

M/c Line No.	Class of Workplace. (1)	No. of exemptions current at 31st Dec. (2)	No. of exemptions granted or extended during year (3)	No. of applications refused or exemptions withdrawn during year (4)	No. of Cases in Cols. 3 and 4 where employees opposed application. (5)	Appeals to Court against refusal to grant or extend an exemption or against the withdrawal of an exemption.	
						No. made (6)	No. allowed (7)
PART I. SPACE (SEC. 5 (2)).							
1. Offices	...	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. Retail Shops	...	7	7	—	—	—	—
3. Wholesale shops, warehouses	...	—	—	—	—	—	—
4. Catering establishments open to public, canteens	...	—	—	—	—	—	—
5. Fuel storage depots	...	—	—	—	—	—	—
PART II. TEMPERATURE (SEC. 6).							
11. Offices	...	—	—	—	—	—	—
12. Retail Shops	...	—	—	—	—	—	—
13. Wholesale shops, warehouses	...	—	—	—	—	—	—
14. Catering establishments open to public, canteens	...	—	—	—	—	—	—
15. Fuel storage depots	...	—	—	—	—	—	—

TABLE D EXEMPTIONS (CONTINUED).
PART III. SANITARY CONVENIENCES (SEC. 9.)

M/c Line No.	Class of Workplace (1)	No. of exemptions current at 31st Dec. (2)	No. of exemptions granted or extended during year. (3)	No. of applications refused or exemptions withdrawn during year. (4)	No. of Cases in Cols. 3 and 4 where employees opposed application. (5)	Appeals to Court against refusal to grant or extend an exemption or against the withdrawal of an exemption.	
						No. made (6)	No. allowed (7)
21.	Offices	—	—	—	—	—	—
22.	Retail Shops	4	4	—	—	—	—
23.	Wholesale shops, warehouses	—	—	—	—	—	—
24.	Catering establishments open to public, canteens ...	—	—	—	—	—	—
25.	Fuel storage depots ...	—	—	—	—	—	—

PART IV. WASHING FACILITIES (SEC. 10.)

31.	Offices	—	—	—	—	—	—
32.	Retail Shops	4	4	—	—	—	—
33.	Wholesale shops, warehouses	—	—	—	—	—	—
34.	Catering establishments open to public, canteens ...	—	—	—	—	—	—
35.	Fuel storage depots ...	—	—	—	—	—	—

TABLE E. PROSECUTIONS

PROSECUTIONS INSTITUTED OF WHICH THE HEARING WAS
COMPLETED IN THE YEAR

Section of Act or title of Regulation or Order.	No. of persons or companies prosecuted.	No. of informations laid.	No. of informations leading to a conviction.
NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL

No. of complaints (or summary applications) made under Section 22 ...	...	...	Nil
No. of interim orders granted	...	...	Nil

FACTORIES ACT, 1961

PREScribed PARTICULARS ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE FACTORIES ACT, 1961

PART I OF THE ACT

1. INSPECTIONS for the purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Public Health Inspectors).

Premises. (1)	Number on Register. (2)	Number of		
		Inspections (3)	Written Notices (4)	Occupiers prosecuted (5)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities ...	18	14	4	—
(ii) Factories not in- cluded in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	—	—	—	—
(iii) Other Premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out- workers' premises)	23	20	3	—
Total	41	34	7	—

2. Cases in which DEFECTS were found

(If defects are discovered at the premises on two, three or more separate occasions they should be reckoned as two, three or more "cases".)

Particulars (1)	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted (6)
	Found (2)	Remedied (3)	Referred		
			To H.M. Inspector (4)	By H.M. Inspector (5)	
Want of cleanliness (S.1)	3	3	—	—	—
Overcrowding (S.2) . .	—	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)	1	1	—	—	—
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)	2	2	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)	—	—	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)					
(a) Insufficient	—	—	—	—	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective	2	2	—	—	—
(c) Not separate for sexes	1	1	—	—	—
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Out-work)	—	—	—	—	—
Total	9	9	—	—	—

PART VIII OF THE ACT OUTWORK (SECTIONS 133 AND 134)

Nature of Work	Section 133				Section 134		
	No. of out-workers in August list required by Section 133(1) (c). (2)	No. of cases of default in sending lists to the Council. (3)	No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists. (4)	No. of instances of work in some unwhole-premises. (5)	Notices served. (6)	Prosecutions (7)	
(1)							
Wearing apparel } Making, etc., cleaning and washing							
Household linen							
Lace, lace curtains and nets							
Curtains and furniture hangings							
Furniture and upholstery							
Electro-plate							
File making							
Brass and brass articles							
Fur pulling							
Iron and steel cables and chains							
Iron and steel and grapnels							
Cart gear							
Locks, latches and keys							
Umbrellas, etc.,							
Artificial flowers							

PART VIII OF THE ACT (CONTINUED)
OUTWORK (SECTIONS 133 AND 134)

Nature of Work	Section 133				Section 134		
	No. of out-workers in August list required by Section 133(1) (c). (2)	No. of cases of default in sending lists to the Council. (3)	No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists. (4)	No. of instances of work in some unwholesome premises. (5)	Notices served. (6)	Prosecutions (7)	
(1)							
Nets, other than wire nets	
Tents	
Sacks	
Racquet and tennis balls	
Paper bags	
The making of boxes or other receptacles or parts thereof made wholly or partially of paper	
Brush making	
Pea picking	
Feather sorting	
Carding, etc., of buttons, etc.	

PART VIII OF THE ACT (CONTINUED)
OUTWORK (SECTIONS 133 AND 134)

Nature of Work	Section 133				Section 134		
	No. of out-workers in August list required by Section 133(1) (c). (2)	No. of cases of default in sending lists to the Council. (3)	No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists. (4)	No. of instances of work in unwholesome premises. (5)	Notices served. (6)	Prosecutions (7)	
(1)							
Stuffed toys ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...
Basket making ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...
Chocolates and sweetmeats ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cosaques, Christmas stockings, etc. ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...
Textile weaving ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...
Lampshades ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	

INTROSPECTION

*" My conscience hath a thousand dreadful tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale :
And every tale condemns me for a villain."*

*Richard III
Shakespeare.*

PREVENTION OF DAMAGE BY PESTS ACT, 1949 REPORT FOR 12 MONTHS ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1971

Type of Property	Non- Agricultural	Agricultural
1. Number of properties in District	6.680	42
2. (a) Total number of properties (including nearby premises) inspected following notification ...	384	4
(b) Number infested by (i) Rats	172	1
(ii) Mice	84	1
3. (a) Total number of properties inspected for rats and/or mice for reasons other than notification	862	23
(b) Number infested by (i) Rats	61	1
(ii) Mice	23	3

SEWERS

4. Number of sewers infested by rats during the year ... 23
All individual complaints during the year were dealt with, which entailed several visits by the Rodent Operator to one single reported case.

The Council sewers were treated, as is usual, twice during the year, while careful attention is given to all school canteens, on behalf of the County Council, and regular visits are also paid to the Council's rubbish dump at Hafodyrynys, and, indeed, all points where complaints were received.

It would seem that notifications intensified during the year, as a result of persons becoming more aware of the rodent problem. The huge road improvement works carried out in the Urban Area; the demolition of large buildings; in short the destruction of the rodents' natural habitats, together with the glorious weather of the spring and late autumn assisted rats in their breeding.

TO ALL LONG SERVING LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICERS

" Experience is the name every one gives to their mistakes."

Oscar Wilde.

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD

One Wednesday afternoon, upon returning home, I purchased some goodies for the children, and among other things a frozen chicken from a local supermarket.

While preparing the chicken for the oven, my wife observed what later was identified as an abscess, thus rendering the chicken unfit for human consumption.

As it was impossible for me to visit the store the next morning to further inspect other frozen chickens on sale to the public, I rang one of the directors asking him to stop the sale, pending my further inspection on Friday.

The frozen chickens were then sawn in halves by a band saw, revealing the abscess in the same position in each one. Fourteen chickens were dealt with in this way. All revealed abscesses in the same spot. Surely this could not be the case. However, to make sure a second opinion was sought. The twenty-eight halves were taken to Cardiff, where the City Corporation Veterinary Officer soon confirmed the opinion already held by the writer.

Providentially on the premises at that time was a lecturer from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and he, in turn, confirmed the opinion already arrived at.

The Chief Bacteriologist further confirmed the type of abscess. One hundred and seventy-nine chickens were condemned as unfit for human consumption.

The head of the firm producing these frozen chickens quickly informed the department of his intention to fly down for an interview. He was naturally very angry, stating that the firm produces forty million chickens a year, and that this situation had never arisen before. He disputed absolutely the findings and was prepared to go further, although I knew of no place he could go, unless it was before the local magistrates' court. Surely he did not want this course of action, the resultant publicity would be harmful to his trade.

With my tongue in my cheek I replied that he did not know what he was b..... talking about. The meeting ended shortly afterwards, mutual agreement being arrived at.

This story brings out three points : —

- (1) were these chickens unfit for human consumption, irrespective of the above opinions?
- (2) it is not every day a millionaire is told that he does not know what he is talking about; and
- (3) it is not every day that one hundred and seventy-nine chickens are condemned.

Finally, I should like to publicly thank all the excellent people who supported and advised me on this matter.

TO THE DOUBTERS

*“ I would rather be a big fish in a small pool
Than a minnow in a big pool.”*

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD

Upon reflection, I must have been born on a Friday. Things always happen to me on a Friday, why, the last Staffing Committee was held on a Friday! With great reluctance I applied, only to meet the same sort of difficulties as those experienced by Robert Bruce's spider, like that spider, I tried, wasn't it nine times before succeeding.

Anyway, back to Friday. One Friday afternoon the telephone rang, and someone asked to speak to the oracle. At once I noted that the voice was modulated, gentle in tone and very scholarly. The person said he was named P..... and was speaking on behalf of his sister, who was then living in Cwmcarn.

He stated that he was not pleased with the department's handling of a blocked drain (purely private) in the house occupied by his sister, and that he was reporting the matter to the Welsh Office. I replied that he could report it to Mrs....., quoting the then Secretary of State's mother.

Within three minutes the telephone rang again, the caller asking for me.

“ Hello ”.

“ Yes ”.

“ This is Mr. speaking, from the Welsh Office ”.

Here again, the voice was not Dai the fat's, or Davies the laverbread's, oh no!

I underwent a quick and thorough viva voca, and Mr. was very satisfied. It goes without saying that the department had done everything possible, short of doing the job and charging back the owner.

However, on the Monday morning a local builder returned from his holidays, and unstopped the drain by nine o'clock.

Undoubtedly, Mr. P....., who put in the telephone call on the Friday afternoon, was pleased, as his sister's drain had been unstopped on the Monday morning; the man from the Welsh Office was pleased; and the contractor was pleased, he had been having a late holiday.

Me, I suffered a temporary demise, which reminds me:—

*“ In the fell clutch of circumstance,
I have not winced or cried aloud
My head is bloody but unbowed.”*

Dr. K. E. HOWELLS, D.P.H. (London),

Medical Officer of Health.

LLOYD G. HALE, F.R.S.H.

Chief Public Health Officer.

